

The office, led by Sheriff Bob White, recently became one of the first law enforcement agencies in the country to receive accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), an honor which only about one of every four law enforcement agencies ever earn.

The Sheriff's Office received this accreditation after an exhaustive review of its policies and procedures. The Office began preparing for its assessment in early 2003 by reviewing its readiness for such a formal and comprehensive review. The men and women in its employ scrutinized hundreds of policies and procedures and revised and rewrote those which needed altering to comply with CALEA standards.

The formal assessment for CALEA accreditation then began last summer. CALEA assessors descended on the Sheriff's office to conduct an inspection which lasted four days. They reviewed files, toured the agency, inspected personnel, tested equipment, listened to presentations, and rode-along on patrols. They then recommended the Office, which met or exceeded nearly all of CALEA's standards, receive full accreditation late last year. The Sheriff's Office must continue to comply with these standards and will undergo the same scrutiny every three years to maintain its accreditation.

The CALEA accreditation means that the Pasco County Sheriff's Office has met accepted law enforcement standards in preventing and controlling crime, increased agency effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of law enforcement services, improved coordination with other law enforcement agencies, and bolstered employee and community confidence in its goals, objectives, policies, and practices.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Pasco County Sheriff's Office is one of the most dedicated and professional law enforcement agencies in the state of Florida and around the country. I am both proud and thankful that Sheriff Bob White and his charges are on the job protecting me and my constituents and representing the law enforcement community so ably and honorably. I hope that our colleagues are as fortunate as my constituents are to have such dedicated men and women protecting them.

HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATIVE AMERICANS ACT OF 2004

HON. JIM MATHESON

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 4471, the Home Ownership Opportunities for Native Americans Act. I was pleased to introduce this bill with my friend and colleague on the Financial Services Committee, Mr. RENZI.

Many Native Americans continue to live in appalling housing conditions even as those in much of the nation have improved. American Indian and Alaska Native populations live in housing that is often and justifiably compared to third world nations. One out of every five Indian homes lacks complete plumbing facilities. Over 90,000, American Indians and Alaska Natives are homeless or underhoused.

On May 3, the Housing Subcommittee of the Financial Services Committee conducted a field hearing on the Navajo Reservation in an effort to better understand the challenges facing Native Americans in obtaining housing and to find ways to improve housing opportunities for Native Americans.

The Home Ownership Opportunities for Native Americans Act is the first of many needed legislative efforts to address the issues raised during our field hearing. This bill makes a simple and necessary correction—it will statutorily confirm a 95% loan guarantee under Title VI of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA).

While this vital Native American housing program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has operated at a 95% loan guarantee level since its implementation, a recent determination by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has indicated that only an 80% loan guarantee level is authorized without further action from Congress. H.R. 4471 makes this needed change and ensures that this important housing program will continue to be used to help Native Americans obtain housing.

I appreciate the strong leadership of my colleague from Arizona, Mr. RENZI, Ranking Member WATERS, and Chairman NEY on this issue. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to address the many difficult challenges facing Native Americans in achieving home ownership.

RECOGNIZING THE SACRIFICE OF AN AMERICAN HERO: SPE- CIALIST ERIC MCKINLEY

HON. DARLENE HOOLEY

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the very special life of Eric MCKINLEY.

Eric, like most young men, loved his family, enjoyed his job, and dreamed of doing something important with the time given him.

But Specialist Eric McKinley was different from most. Simply put, Eric did more in his brief twenty-four years than many ever will. This local hero volunteered to serve his community, his State, and his Nation for a six year enlistment with the Oregon Army National Guard.

He proudly did his duty, and then he did more. You see, Eric was due to come home and be discharged in early April. His family, his friends, and his coworkers at the bakery shop in Corvallis where he worked longed for his laugh, his smile—his gentle presence.

But it was not to be.

Like a lot of young soldiers, Eric McKinley's service was extended in Iraq because his special skills were needed to rebuild a broken state, protect a delicate peace, and foster a climate within which a vulnerable but growing seed of democracy might take root.

Eric took his duty seriously, he knew the risks, and yet this self-sacrificing man chose to serve. He accepted his charge without complaint, he understood the need of the extension and quietly soldiered on as he always had.

Eric is the face of the Guard—but he is also the face of our community.

His desire was simple: lift young people up; provide them with new and viable alternatives for a healthy life, and provide a place for safe and meaningful fun.

Eric McKinley will not have the opportunity to build his own business as he had dreamed and watch the young people of Benton County enjoy the fun of a safe haven.

We are all now indebted to Eric's spirit and sacrifice. We are all now accountable to seek out the opportunities of tomorrow to help the young people that he cared so much about. We must stretch ourselves to make Eric's vision a new reality. All of us must join together to take up Eric's personal commitment in seeking to provide opportunities for the young people in our lives.

As the seasons come and the time passes, the pain of our loss will slowly subside. But the sacrifice of Eric McKinley will be as significant then as it is today: he gave his all so that others could have life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Eric's sacrifice must always be remembered.

It is now, and will be forever, our turn to repay the debt.

TRIBUTE TO COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR BILLY TENTION

HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the career of an extraordinary South Carolinian, United States Army Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Billy Tention. Following 30 years of distinguished service and after reaching the Army's highest enlisted rank, CSM Tention will retire from active duty on July 9, 2004. The significance of this milestone is matched only by his devoted service.

General George C. Marshall once said, "There is no limit to the good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit." This defines the military career of CSM Tention.

Born in September 1953, in Camden, South Carolina, he entered the Army in September 1974, after graduating from Ashwood Central High School. He underwent basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and received his Advanced Training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. CSM Tention then excelled at every rung up the leadership ladder. From his early days as non-commissioned officer in charge of the Services Branch at Eisenhower Army Medical Center to Hospital Command Sergeant Major at Fort Leonard Wood, CSM Tention has demonstrated the Army's core values: selfless service, loyalty, honor, and integrity.

His dedicated 30-year commitment to the Army speaks of his loyalty, loyalty to his country, the Army, and most importantly, his fellow soldiers. "Do your duty in all things," General Robert E. Lee once said. "You can never do more. You should never wish to do less." CSM Tention did his duty through service in numerous assignments including war-fighting during the first Persian Gulf War and other overseas duty in Europe and Asia. There's an old Army saying: "Take care of your people,

and they'll take care of you." CSM Tention has been taking care of his people for 30 years. Whether it's exceeding recruitment/retention goals, yielding the highest Expert Field Medical Badge graduation rate, or spearheading Dining In's and ethnic recognition programs, CSM Tention's actions reflect the highest respect and honor among seniors, peers, and subordinates alike.

CSM Tention's awards and decorations include two Legions of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, 10 Good Conduct Medals, the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait), the Expert Field Medical Badge, the Air Assault Badge, and the Recruiter Badge with 3 Gold Stars.

CSM Tention earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Columbia College in 2004 and is working towards a Master's degree in Human Resource Management from Webster University.

I am proud to represent all South Carolinians in thanking CSM Tention and his family for their dedication, commitment to country, and service. CSM Tention is a credit to the United States Army and to the United States of America. I wish him all the best as he makes the transition to civilian life.

COMMENDING MILAN OPACICH

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to commend one of Northwest Indiana's most distinguished citizens, Milan Opacich, of Schererville, Indiana. Milan is one of twelve exemplary master folk and traditional artists chosen to receive the 2004 National Heritage Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts. On Thursday, September 30, 2004, he will be honored by the United States Government for his artistic excellence and his contributions to the art field. Milan's praiseworthy contributions will be recognized in Washington, D.C., at an awards ceremony on Capitol Hill.

Since 1982, the Endowment has awarded more than 282 National Heritage Fellowships. Recipients include bluesman B.B. King, Irish step dancer Michael Flatley, and acclaimed performers Shirley Caesar, Doc Watson, and Bill Monroe. Recipients are nominated, often by members of their own communities, and then judged by a panel on the basis of their continuing artistic accomplishments and contributions as practitioners or teachers. Milan was chosen for his expertise and commitment to passing on his skills and cultural traditions to a new generation. I can truly say that Milan is a dedicated, distinguished and committed citizen. I have known him for many years and consider him a close personal friend.

Milan was born and raised in Gary, Indiana by a Croatian mother and a Serbian father. He became interested in string music at the age of four, and at the age of fourteen he began playing country music. At the age of eighteen he took up tamburitza music. After high school, Milan became a journeyman tool and die maker, honing the skills he used to build

the tamburitza, a stringed instrument resembling the mandolin. He built instruments for himself, family, and friends; he also played in one of several orchestras.

In 1958 Milan joined the Gary Fire Department. He set up a small workshop in the basement of the firehouse to continue making his instruments during down times. When he wasn't fighting fires, Milan was in the basement of the firehouse making instruments. He worked for the Gary Fire Department for 20 years, retiring 26 years ago. Milan now resides in Schererville, Indiana. He has converted his garage into a workshop similar to a museum of musical instruments. He has several pictures highlighting the different bands he has played with over the years, most recently the Drina Tamburitza Orchestra. Today he is recognized as this Nation's premiere tamburitza maker. His instruments have been exhibited at both the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution and at the Roy Acuff Museum. In 2002, he was named to the Tamburitza Association of America Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Milan Opacich for his outstanding contributions to the arts. His family and friends should be proud of his accomplishments. I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Milan Opacich for his lifetime of remarkable accomplishments and enduring service.

HIGHER EDUCATION SUSTAINABILITY ACT OF 2004

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Higher Education Sustainability Act of 2004," which would authorize \$50 million for six Sustainability Education Centers across the country to develop and implement integrated environmental, economic, and social sustainability programs. Each Sustainability Center will focus on multidisciplinary research, education, and outreach at institutions of higher education.

Sustainable development practices are being advanced by hundreds of U.S. cities and companies and through a variety of international agencies including the United Nations and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. As population growth, urban development and extreme weather incidents place great stress on ecosystems around the globe, the need for developing innovative and successful sustainable development practices becomes critical to sustaining our economic competitiveness, improving our environmental health and creating more livable communities.

In my home State of Oregon, we have many great examples of sustainable development and livable communities. Portland State University, located in my hometown, provides an excellent example of how to incorporate sustainability throughout the curriculum. Faculty from the departments of social sciences, life sciences, physical sciences, humanities, as well as the professional schools have been working to incorporate sustainability principles

in their coursework and research. PSU has developed several new initiatives developed, including a Certificate in Sustainability Program focusing on PSU's partnerships with Asia and Europe.

Portland State University's Sustainability Initiative has placed a high priority on Green Buildings that use smart technology to improve operational performance and produce significant energy savings. Their green Stephen Epler Residence Hall, opened this fall, uses harvested rainwater in restrooms and features low-flow water fixtures for showers and toilets. Its integrated energy design is projected to produce an expected \$29,000 a year in annual energy cost savings. PSU will save an additional \$275,000 in energy cost across the campus this year simply by installing energy-efficient equipment and lighting fixtures and adjusting temperature settings. These savings translate into the tuition costs for nearly 80 students—a significant figure, given the rising cost of college today!

These innovations are just a few among many that are already underway in colleges and universities across the nation. This legislation will ensure that we can extend these innovations to all our institutions of higher learning. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this bill and make a commitment to making our educational communities more sustainable and livable.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 4659, USERRA HEALTH CARE COVERAGE EXTENSION ACT OF 2004

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Benefits of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am pleased to introduce H.R. 4659, the "USERRA Health Care Coverage Extension Act of 2004." I introduce this measure jointly with Representative MICHAEL MICHAUD, ranking member of the Benefits Subcommittee.

The bill would increase to 24 months, up from 18 months, the maximum period of employer-provided health care coverage that an employee covered by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) may elect to continue to receive while mobilized as a reservist or Guard member. This legislation would also reinstate reporting requirements for the Department of Labor in consultation with the Office of Special Counsel and the Department of Justice on USERRA cases.

Mr. Speaker, due to the technical nature of this bill, I have kept it in draft form until now. This approach has afforded the Committee on Veterans' Affairs the opportunity to take testimony on the bill, today in fact, as part of a hearing titled, "Protecting the Rights of Those Who Protect Us: Public Sector Compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Improvements to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)." I am grateful to Chairman CHRISTOPHER SMITH and ranking member LANE EVANS for convening today's hearing because America has mobilized 387,986 reserve and Guard members in support of Operation